

January 28, 1957

Dear Victor:

So your hangout is Puerto Vallarta. Jean Weigle was there during ~~Sixth~~ December.

I would have written you sooner, but thought you preferred a surcease from the battle-line during your expedition.

We are in something of a cross-fire. In addition to Stanford's very cordial bid, we have one from the Genetics Department at Berkeley (vice Clausen) which is, I should emphasize, independent in intent if not in timing. Then, here at Wisconsin, there has been an acceleration of earlier discussions; a faculty committee will soon review a concrete proposal for a new department of Medical Genetics. The standing of these possibilities is very much the same in regard to such matters as salary and laboratory facilities. If this were a world where one could eat a cake and have it too, I would want to take advantage in turn of the unique opportunities that each of these possibilities has to offer.

To be very candid with you Victor, if I were pressed to make an instant decision, I probably would have to say 'probably not' to Stanford, and I would advise you now to start thinking of some alternative candidates. If you are interested, I may have some suggestions for you in a week or two. However, I have to say that the pendulum has at least quivered a few times, and more sober reflection and realistic reappraisal might make it swing. What I am asking of you is that you keep this offer open for, say, another month (during which you can be making other deliberations) if you can do this without compromising your overall plans. I have been in touch, by mail, with Cliff (and have been one of your more enthusiastic salesmen to him); I would, for example, welcome a chance to go over this in person with him before locking the door. If you are returning a little early, you might get Cliff to go out during February so that I could see him before the 'deadline.' In any case, you can be sure that we have welcomed this chance to get closer to Stanford and if, for example, we should end up at Berkeley (which is just one of the three possibilities) we would make a point of cultivating these relationships as a matter of self-interest.

I ran across a small news item buried in the N.Y. Times which must have a disturbing import—namely that Dean Cutting had resigned; no explanations were published. Is this a point of any concern to myself?

Everyone at Stanford was so nice to us that we feel a little abashed to have to show the least hesitation in joining the family. I hope you will sympathize with our problems of decision.

Yours

Joshua Lederberg

January 28, 1957

Dear Victor:

So you're in Puerto Vallarta! We had ~~missed~~ missed seeing Jean Weigle (from Caltech) during our visit west because he was down there then.

I would have written you sooner but thought you wanted some surcease during your expedition.

We find ourselves in something of a cross-fire. In addition to Stanford, we now have a bid from Berkeley (which is, I hasten to add, independent in intent if not in timing). And then, matters here in relation to medical genetics have moved at an accelerated pace: a faculty committee will soon review a concrete proposal for such a department-- a program that, as you know, has been one of my aspirations for a long time. The standing of these various offers in regard to such things as salary and laboratory facilities is very much the same.

Frankly, if I had a way to manage it, I would be delighted with a program that would leave me here about six years more to get the medical genetics group well underway, about ten at Berkeley, with its somewhat too urbane atmosphere, and a final settling down at Stanford. (You can see from this where California stands in our long-run estimations). But we sometimes have to take our opportunities as we find them, and needless to say whatever we come to do now will not be in the terms of such a plan. Life is too unpredictable to